

Montana Transportation Partnership
May 16, 2007
Wilderness Room, Colonial Drive
Helena, Montana

Members Attending: Audrey Allums (for Dick Turner) MDT, Marlene Disburg (DPHHS), Nickie Fee (SILC), Jim Helgeson (MTA), Mary Millin (Advocate), Shawn Parker (Advocate), Corky Sias, (for Arlene Timpler), Michelle Thibodeau (DPHHS)

Guests: Lyn Hellegard (MTA), Steven Potuzak (MDT)

Introductions were made. Request to review minutes and motion to approve.
THIBODEAU/Millin

Correspondence from MTA to DPHHS

Tom Osborn, Chair distributed a copy of a letter from Montana Transit Association to the Department of Public Health and Human Services (Department), accompanied by Joan Miles' response.

Points of Discussion:

- Policies and Procedures including Goals and Objectives have always indicated advocacy is a function of the MTP role and responsibilities.
- MTA participated in and has been provided the MTP policies and procedures.
- If an organization does not buy-in to the goals and objectives of the MTP a decision can be made to not participate.
- MTA participated in United We Ride proposal development and approved that the MTP send in the proposal.
- No Executive Order from the MTP requested or advocated authority of any State department.
- Executive Order did provide opportunity for MTP to advise State departments.
- MTA noted concerns that MTP is an organization that basically represents people who use transportation determining that there needs to be a systems change in transportation.
- MTA concerns that identification of stakeholder status indicates agreement with actions of MTP.
- MTA concerns that MTA whether a member of MTP or not will be recognized as a Stakeholder.
- Stakeholder's obligation to participate and vote according to their beliefs although not part of obligation to undermine the organization.
- SB 160/TransAde and request for clarification of accountability to designated populations in the legislation.

- Response to Great Falls Transit statement, during a meeting of the Great Falls ADA Committee meeting that the “Montana Transportation Partnership” lobbied against TransAde funding for transit agencies.
- MTA’s concern that MTP submitting a stakeholder list with grant applications implies that all stakeholders, specifically MTA, listed have provided approval for submitted proposals. MTA wants MTP to request a letter of support from all stakeholders listed with any proposals.
- MTA concerns that MTP’s agenda is that the MTP can do transportation/transit better than transit providers.
- MTP emphasis is to identify opportunities to coordinate. MTP use of the MCDD Toolkit as a way to support coordination.
- Concerns of lobbying and implications for “partners” that don’t agree with majority vote decision on issues. Action: Tom and Mary will research barriers and implications and bring information to the next meeting.
- Need to understand state and federal lobbying regulations and how they do or do not impact certain State partners and the activities of the Partnership.

Goal/Objective Development

Goal 1: Seek opportunities to secure additional resources for more rides.

Objective: Develop a plan of action.

Tasks:

1. Research barriers to participating in legislative process for resource opportunities.

Responsible: Mary Millin and Tom Osborn

Timeline: Information on Item 1 will be provided at next meeting.

2. Look at needs of community – review needs assessments.

Points of Discussion:

- MDT applications for 5311 and other funding opportunities are over matched. MDT noted they have more match opportunities than available FTA dollars.
- Intent to secure more general fund to assist more transportation, i.e. rides, is the purpose of this goal.
- 5307 para-transit needs exceed 5307 budgets.
- Fixed route 5311 services do not develop or expand because they cannot afford FTA regulated complimentary para-transit systems. Systems use demand response as alternative to fixed route.
- Development of a subcommittee to begin work on the plan and timelines to achieve the goal.
- Volunteers were requested by the chair to assist. Marlene and Mary agreed to participate.
- Mary and Tom will do preliminary research for potential legislation and others who will buy-in, i.e. other departments, Commerce to assist in legislative process.

- Need to look at and develop report on what the needs are. MDT allows local communities to conduct their own needs assessment. Needs assessments are required under coordination plan. Can use information as resource.

Goal 2: Fulfill Montana Transportation Partnership Membership

Objective: Invite and secure members in membership categories not currently filled including Legislative, Commerce, Higher Education,

Points of Discussion:

- Action: Shawn will talk to MCDD regarding participation of MCDD legislative members.
- Mary Millin educated the members on the Montana Disability and Health program (MTDH) she is participating in and requested assistance from members for names of other persons with disabilities, maybe with legislative status, to participate and be covered for expenses by the MTDH coalition. Representation by someone from eastern Montana is preferable.
- Action: Mary Millin will contact LIFTT for persons with disability representation and a county commissioner she personally knows to get representation from MACO.
- Action: Tom will email David Eaton to advise he will receive a call from Mary re: consumer recruitment.
- Legislative representation on other entities has proven successful in advancing goals.

Goal 3: Obtain statutory authority for local Transportation Advisory Councils.

Points of Discussion:

- TAC recognition will assist in process to gain more resources for more rides.
- A Designated State Unit (DSU) would have to be assigned to collect and administer any financial resources that would be designated to the TACs.
- What kind of authority would be given to the TACs.
- Process to ask TACs for feedback and recommendation.
- May be beneficial to review Service Area Authority as an example – model for TACs
Action: Provide statute for review.
- Need wide range of stakeholders attending. Need to be something accomplished at the meetings w/an agenda to accomplish something.
- TACs may need better education on how state agencies work.
- TACs could benefit with revenue to recruit and maintain stakeholders, support monthly meetings.
- Need support/resources to assist in identification of barriers and gaps in a community and the system.
- MDT mixed feelings regarding TACs receiving revenue – specifically how the resources will be administered. Concern that any statutory authority may cause

divisions. Concern TACs and providers may have issues with who is in control of process.

- The statutory authority would provide definition for the TACs. A mechanism would be developed to identify stakeholders and how to get stakeholders involved.
- Any resources proposed for the TACs would be new dollars – any proposal does not advocate for existing dollars to be diverted to the TACs.
- Action: Tom Osborn requested volunteers for a subcommittee to work on statutory recognition and definition for TACs. Would support the federal requirements and definition for community coordination groups. MDT and MTA indicated they could not support the goal and could not sit on a subcommittee. Committee members: Tom Osborn, Michelle Thibodeau, Marlene Disburg
- Action: Tom Osborn will forward Jim Helgeson the link to the Coordination Toolkit.
- Recognition for TACs can help secure county/city resources for transit system.
- TACs provide a voice to the rider and a forum to work with and participate with provider agencies.

Goal: Complete the Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities Transportation Coordination Handbook Supplement.

Objective: Develop MTP workgroup to review and comment. (completed)

Objective: Assist MCDD to finalize supplement. (in progress)

Objective: Develop training process and materials to be used by Partnership and agencies. (in progress)

Task: Meeting between WTI and MDT planners to discuss concerns. (completed)

Task: Set date for approval of new UWR Scope of Work

Points of Discussion:

- Review of Supplement has been completed – concentration on FTA reauthorization.
- MCDD still needs to work with WTI to finalize.
- MDT planners have met with WTI to discuss potential issues that need to be addressed in the Supplement. No information was available at the time.
- WTI is putting the scope of work for training on the Handbook/Supplement.
- Scheduled fall training will need to be coordinated with MDT planners.

Goal: Provide effective training for users and community members to participate on TACs.

Objective: Finalize training materials and training process (including Handbook and Supplement)

Objective: Develop a consistent plan and schedule for implementing training.

Objective: Determine target areas through assessment of TACs.

Points of Discussion:

- Comparison to development of Independent Living Services

- Discussion on development of TACs – MDT supports ‘people doing’ – expects communities to do their own TACs. Originally started to prioritize capital assistance grants.
- MDT believes there may be unintended outcomes to ‘authority’ to TACs
- Questions on leadership and responsibility for the TACs. MDT noted it is a community’s responsibility to develop and support a TAC. TACs are a mechanism of MDT
- Concern from MTA regarding a group of community people directing a transit board.
- TAC structure is tailored made to meet FTA coordination requirements. TAC would use revenue for own operating costs – meeting room, access to supplies for meeting functions, interpreters.... If a TAC is not dependent on volunteers the potential to function more efficiently would exist.
- Providers can benefit from TACs being strengthened. Providers can access performance tools, use of data, to support transit decisions before the TAC and request assistance from the TAC when the TAC makes recommendations.
- Questions/considerations regarding community coordinators and interactions with TAC.
- Suggestion to have a TAC conference to display model TAC operations and provide opportunity for discussion on components need to create successful TACs.
- Concern from MTA that providing resources to a TAC can create a bureaucracy without knowing implications. In some cases MTA has experienced a TAC attempting to taken more ‘authority’ than exceeds role.
- If a TAC definition is statutory what happens when a designated member opts out of participation.
- Federal statute supports outreach and indication that designated members have been invited and recruited.
- MDT believes statutory authority is not timely. A better first step would be to build capacity of the TACs.
- Training, as planned, can help build capacity.
- Other considerations are transit board of directors and who has the authority – how will TACs get money (501c3 status), need IRS status.
- How considerations are answered will need to be researched.
- Goal development and outcomes is a process and occurs over time. Understanding differences in language can facilitate process of goal development.

Goal: Research ways to provide flexibility for funding streams to transit agencies.

Points of Discussion:

- CSKT representative requested that the issue be considered for discussion.
- Looking at maintenance facility to provide services outside of CSKT - for additional revenue.
- MDT/FTA could not approve venture. FTA imposes guidelines to MDT on these types of issues.

- MDT can impose own restrictions if choose. MDT is restricted to FTA rules at a minimum.
- In some cases transit operations are not able to use federal supported resources (buildings) to generate income, or interfere w/private enterprise.
- Discussion regarding restrictions when an agency receives federal funding – will tie up nicely in highway reauthorization bill. Providers and TAC members will be able to work together to address issues together.
- Revenue streams – put a package together for some of the other providers – to consider how may replicate some ideas from CSKT. (build and maintain a business in a building funded by federal dollars – FTA regulations apply)
- Lease of a building can be considered income and used for match. MDT is willing to provide assistance to providers who are willing to research or look for other funding streams and support them if possible in keeping with FTA restrictions.
- 5311 Providers would go through MDT for questions and assistance. 5307 providers can request assistance directly from FTA as they receive federal funds directly from FTA.
- Consideration: should funding concerns and explanations be included in Handbook to assist new providers.
- Action: The Chair asked the group how they would like to proceed with this goal. Group would like to know what opportunities or barriers exist. Consider commenting to reauthorization document on barriers when available.
- Action: Group was asked for members to participate on a committee to conduct research and develop questions on this goal. The importance of provider representation was noted. MTA declined to participate. MDT advised consider after consultation with supervisor for approval to participate. CSFK indicated a desire to keep in the loop.
- Action: Develop a questionnaire/survey to TACs and providers to acquire information on barriers to acquiring funding options.

TransAde - MDT

Points of Discussion:

- There are no procedural changes in 2007 funding year for TransAde.
- 5307 (Small urban communities with a population of 50,000 - 199,000) will see majority of TransAde dollars as the majority of elderly and disabled live in small urban communities in Montana.
- TransAde Advisory Group (TAG) – developed to come up with options for flexibility in light of passage of SB 160.
- Four Core questions developed to consider how TransAde is awarded for future years, within scope of law. Questions provided to members.
- Plan to query additional groups on Four Core questions.
- MDT has received overwhelming number of applications for TransAde funding.
- TransAde has been reduced significantly – 50% as result of law passed in 2003. Looking at \$250,000/year in TransAde = approximately \$50,000 per district

5309 Funding – Discretionary Dollars - MDT

Points of Discussion:

- MDT received over \$10 million in funding requests for Section 5311, 5310, JARC and New Freedom programs. MDT is hopeful that Section 5309 dollars will help supplement applications.
- A portion of federal Earmark dollars have become 'discretionary' to the states - some appropriated to the 5309 program. Gulf Coast Recovery will no doubt be a priority for the FTA under 5309 program.
- Other categories to apply under include: fleet replacement and rural needs categories, inter-modal bus facilities and service increase or improvements exist where Montana applicants may be successful.
- 5309 funding requests will be decided directly by the FTA – MDT will categorize by 5309 funding categories.
- 5309 funding is at 80/20 match ratio. Not included in sliding fee scale formula. Future funding under 5309 is not clear – expected for a couple of years. It is expected areas of priority will be determined yearly by FTA. Projects that are in the final planning stages are likely to get greater consideration.
- Montana new start programs are being considered as priority for new capital if they don't have a vehicle or one that meets ADA. Want to keep current systems in operation.
- 5310 Capital decisions will be made after 5309 decisions are made by FTA and MDT is notified.
- Action: Audrey Allums will forward Core TransAde Questions to Tom Osborn for distribution to Partnership. Members will respond directly to Audrey Allums